

*Louisianians Can Cash Checks at No Charge at Whitney Bank Branches*

August 9, 2010

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congressman Charlie Melancon (LA-03) made the following statement in response to BP's announcement that they had made a \$3 billion initial deposit into the escrow account to pay claims resulting from the oil disaster in the Gulf. The deposit is the first BP has made toward the \$20 billion they have pledged to pay Gulf residents to compensate for the effects of the spill.

**“The \$3 billion deposit BP made today is a welcome first step toward making Louisianians whole,”** said Rep. Melancon. **“Our recovery from this disaster is dependent on how fast we can get resources into the hands of the people most affected by the oil leak. I will continue pushing to hold BP accountable and speed up payments to the residents, fishermen, and small business owners throughout Louisiana who are struggling to make it through this catastrophe.”**

BP also announced today that Louisianians will be able to cash their BP checks free of charge at any of the 160 Whitney National Bank branches across the Gulf Coast region. Headquartered in New Orleans, Whitney National Bank is the oldest continuously operating bank in Louisiana.

The BP oil disaster has impacted three major sectors of Louisiana's economy – fishing, offshore energy production, and tourism – affecting thousands of workers. Congressman Melancon worked to pass an amendment in the House of Representatives to [end the moratorium](#) on deep-water drilling. The offshore energy industry is a major economic engine for south Louisiana, providing thousands of jobs and supporting numerous locally-based service companies in Congressman Melancon's Congressional district.

Congressman Melancon was also successful in passing an amendment in the House to direct up to \$1 billion in BP penalty payments to [Gulf coastal restoration projects](#). The damage the BP oil disaster is causing to America's wetlands will take decades for Louisiana to fully recover from. The Melancon amendment will hold BP accountable by law for repairing the destruction by directing oil spill penalty money to Louisiana

Congressman Melancon represents in Congress the areas of coastal Louisiana most directly affected by the oil leak, including Plaquemines, St. Bernard, Terrebonne, Lafourche, St. Mary and southern Jefferson Parishes. The Deepwater Horizon platform was located 50 miles off the coast of Louisiana's Third Congressional District.

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